

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to thank Examiners Collins and Browne for discussing this application during the interview on August 14, 2003. Applicant Jim Goddard was present for the interview and explained to the Examiners the present invention, as well as distinctions between the present invention and the Goddard and Bonnema et al. references that are applied by the Examiner in the pending Office Action.

As explained during the interview, the Goddard reference, U.S. Patent No. 6,129,209, does not disclose either water tightness or an annular reinforcement, and the Bonneam et al. reference, U.S. Patent No. 4,913,473, is not water-tight in addition to being non-analogous art. Bonnema et al. teaches a pipe that is coupled by a laborer at the time of installation of the pipe (i.e., at the installation, and as the pipe lengths are fed through a boot). This is different than the pipe disclosed in the present application. The pipe of the present invention is coupled before installation and therefore requires no laborer to connect the pipe at the installation site. Because the pipe of the present invention is coupled before installation, it must be transported to the installation site in a pre-coupled series of pipe sections. This requires, for example, coiling the desired length of pipe prior to moving the pipe to the installation site. Coiling and uncoiling the pipe, as well as pre-coupled installation methods, exert forces on the pipe coupling of the present invention that must be compensated for in the strength of the pipe coupling and sealing characteristics. One of ordinary skill in the art would not look to the Bonnema et al. reference for a teaching applicable to pre-coupled pipe because the teachings of Bonnema et al. do not relate to the forces incurred by pre-coupled pipe.

Instead, the teachings of Bonnema et al. relate to the ease and efficiency of installation by a laborer at the installation site.

Further, the Bonnema et al. reference does not teach or suggest the claimed reinforcement. With respect to claims 18, 26, and 29 Bonnema et al.'s belt does not resist loss of sealing engagement or retain sealing engagement between the female end and the sealing element during use of the pipe. Bonnema et al. discloses, at column 7, lines 16-20, that the belt merely insures retention of the latch members within the valley. Thus, Applicants submit that the rejection of independent claims 18, 26, and 29 should be withdrawn and the claims allowed. Claims 19-25 depend directly or indirectly from claim 18 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons. Claim 27 and 28 depend directly or indirectly from claim 26 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.


Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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